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## MBB Season Preview: Eagles Open First Week of Full Practice

Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern University



MBB Season Preview: Eagles Open First Week of Full Practice  
GS hosts Charleston Southern in an Exhibition game Oct. 30.

Marc Gignac

Men's Basketball

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**STATESBORO** – It used to be that the NCAA limited offseason basketball workouts so much that the first day of practice was a monumental occasion, marked by Midnight Madness, a rite of fall and a clear notice that basketball season was approaching.

Nowadays, truth be told, these guys have been at it for months, but that did not dampen the excitement surrounding Georgia Southern basketball as the Eagles started their first full week of practice Monday. There is a knowing look shared by those who have followed the program closely over the last few years that this season could be a special one.

On paper, GS returns just five letterwinners, but three of them are seniors who have a combined 275 games played and 233 starts among them. [Tookie Brown](#) and [Ike Smith](#) will go down as two of the top scorers in program history, and [Montae Glenn](#) is arguably the best true big man Georgia Southern has had in over a decade.

"The good news is that we have three seniors who have basically started since they were freshmen, and those guys have been through everything," said Byington. "They know how the league works, they know how the schedule works and they know the rhythm of the season. We have some guys with height who sat out last year in [Simeon Carter](#) and [Tyshaun Crawford](#), who were in the program, and [Quan Jackson](#) had a really good redshirt freshman year. So we're going to depend on returnees because they know so much about what is going to go on, but it's a very talented freshman class and a group of junior college players who are going to help us too."

The newcomers – two junior college transfers and four freshman - also add a ton of length, athleticism and versatility. Mix that talented group with the returnees, and it is no secret why the Eagles have been selected preseason favorites to finish in the top-3 of the Sun Belt Conference by numerous publications.

"We're bigger and more athletic than we have been since I've been here for sure and probably going back many, many years into Georgia Southern's history," said Georgia Southern coach [Mark Byington](#). "We have a lot of length that I don't think we've had before."

Georgia Southern will have four weeks of practice before hosting Charleston Southern in an exhibition contest in Hanner Fieldhouse Oct. 30. The whole team was on campus for the second summer session so the newcomers already have a pretty good handle on terminology, the different drills the Eagles do and expectations of the coaching staff. Now, it's about continuing to get better with a high level of competition at practice and seeing what roles will be filled by whom.

"I'm excited about the competition in practice, and that means we are deep," said Byington. "I know what Tookie, Ike, Montae and Quan are because they have played so much, but I'm curious to see what other guys can look like in different positions. I have spent a lot of time with trial and error and playing different lineups already, and we'll see how everything shakes out. We are deep, we are versatile and we are athletic and long, and that's very exciting."

Georgia Southern reached 20 wins for the second time in four years in 2017-18, posting a 21-12 mark, and joined Louisiana and UTA as the only three Sun Belt schools to notch double-digit conference wins in each of the last four seasons.

Eagle basketball annually offers one of the best values in the Sun Belt for season tickets, and this year is no different. Season tickets in the lower reserved sections (F-J) are \$175 and sell out quickly while season tickets in the upper reserved sections (7-12) are \$140. General admission season tickets are \$100 and courtside seats are \$450 each (minimum \$1,200 Eagle Fund donation required to purchase courtside seats).

Fans who purchase a men's season tickets will have a women's season ticket included for no additional charge.  
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